1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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XVII

MEDICINE AND MAGIC

812 WE have seen that in the easy-going philosophy of the Orokaiva the course of nature is largely taken for granted. All the things and processes of the world exist or happen *per se*; they are not under any omnipotent control nor do they submit to continual regulation by any personal powers. But we have also seen that they may be *influenced* for good or evil by the *sovai*, i.e. those beings who survive death.

Now it appears that the *sovai* are not the only agencies by which nature may be mysteriously influenced in one direction or the other. There is in Orokaiva philosophy a second kind of agency, equally occult, by which the normal happenings of nature may be interfered with: this is the power of magic and sorcery. Magic and sorcery have been dealt with at length in another report,[1] so that it is not my purpose here to describe their general methods, much less to elaborate the theory which was attempted in that essay. The present chapter will deal with a single subject—fairly well defined—that of diseases, their putative causes and treatment, and it will touch upon the magical aspect of these treatments only in passing.

Causes of Disease

753 The native, while believing that the *sovai* and the living magician or sorcerer can influence nature both for good and evil, is yet more impressed by misfortune than by ordinary success, so that it is especially in the face of calamity or failure that his thoughts turn to occult explanations. Since no misfortune, perhaps, impresses him so frequently or forcibly as that of sickness or disease, we shall not be surprised to find the responsibility for this, which seems like an interference with the normal course of nature, fixed sometimes upon the *sovai* and sometimes upon the sorcerer.

[1] *Orokaiva Magic.*